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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION Ø1 OF Ø3 LOME Ø2921

E.O. 12Ø65: GDS 27 JUN 86 (JOHNSON, MARILYN P.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, TO
SUBJECT: OLYMPIO EFFORTS TO DISCREDIT EYADEMA REGIME

REF: (A) USINFO 251221Z JUN 8Ø NOTAL, (B) USUN 2449 NOTAL
(C) LOME 2899

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

2. THE JUNE 8 NOSSITER ARTICLE APPEARS TO BE ROUNDUP OF ACCUSATIONS GILCHRIST OLYMPIO, AN AVOWED ENEMY OF PRESIDENT EYADEMA, HAS BEEN MAKING TO DISCREDIT AND DESTABILIZE EYADEMA REGIME. IT MAKES NO REFERENCE TO INDEPENDENT OR PUBLISHED SOURCES AND IS NOT BALANCED ANALYTICAL PIECE PORTRAYING BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY. MANY OF THE STATEMENTS AND KEY FACTS ARE MISLEADING OR FALSE. SUCH PUBLICATION OF DEROGATORY INFORMATION WITHOUT A REAL EFFORT TO CONSULT TOGOLESE AUTHORITIES PROVIDES AMMUNITION FOR THIRD WORLD CRITICS OF WESTERN JOURNALISM WHO DEMAND A NEW INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION ORDER.

3. WHILE TOGO HAS SERIOUS FOREIGN DEBT PROBLEMS, IT IS NOT BANKRUPT. TOGO'S MAJOR CREDITORS HAVE AGREED TO A RE-SCHEDULING OF TOGO'S DEBT, AND TOGO HAS UNDERTAKEN A STANDBY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE IMF. ALTHOUGH TOGO'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE STANDBY HAS BEEN UNEVEN TO DATE, IT HAS BEEN ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO MAKE LOCAL OBSERVERS AND THE IMF OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE MEDIUM TERM PROSPECTS FOR THE TOGOLESE ECONOMY.

4. CERTAINLY, PRESIDENT EYADEMA WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN UNDERTAKING A NUMBER OF THE ILL-CONCEIVED PROJECTS REFERRED TO IN THE ARTICLE. HOWEVER, TOGO AND ITS PRESIDENT ARE NOT ALONE AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN REACTING UNWISELY TO UNEXPECTED WEALTH GENERATED BY RISING COMMODITY PRICES. NOR IS TOGO ALONE IN HAVING EMPHASIZED INDUSTRIALIZATION AT THE EXPENSE OF AGRICULTURE. THE 1974-1978 BOOM PERIOD DID SEE PROJECTS IN STEEL AND OIL REFINING, CEMENT CLINKER PRODUCTION, PORT EXPANSION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AND ROAD AND DAM CONSTRUCTION. HOWEVER, THERE WERE ALSO PROJECTS IN COCOA, COTTON, PALM OIL AND COFFEE PRODUCTION, POTABLE WATER AND ELECTRIFICATION FOR THE INTERIOR, AND IRRIGATION FOR RICE AND LEGUME CULTIVATION. MOST OF THE ABOVE PROJECTS ARE HELPING TO RAISE THE LIVING STANDARDS OF SEGMENTS OF THE TOGOLESE POPULATION AND SEVERAL ARE EXPORT EARNING, HELPING THE TOGOLESE ECONOMY TO RECOVER FROM ITS CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BY THE MID 1980'S.

5. AS FOR THE SPECIFIC PROJECTS MENTIONED IN THE NOSSITER ARTICLE, THE STEEL MILL MAKES LITTLE ECONOMIC SENSE FOR TOGO EXCEPT IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD BE ABLE TO EXPLOIT ITS IRON ORE DEPOSITS

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IN BANDJELI NEAR DASSAR. THE STEEL MILL WILL BE A DRAIN ON THE ECONOMY AS LONG AS IT IS OPERATED. HOWEVER, THE CONSTRUCTION COST CLOSER TO DOLS 4Ø MILLION THAN 1ØØ MILLION, AND IT DOES PRODUCE REINFORCED IRON BAR.

6. THE TOTAL COST OF THE OIL REFINERY IS NEARER DOLS 8Ø MILLION THAN 1ØØ MILLION. IT REFINED 387,ØØØ METRIC TONS IN 1979 AND SHOULD REFINE 9ØØ,ØØØ M.T. IN 1980. WITH FAVORABLE MARKET CONDITIONS, THE OIL REFINERY WILL CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO TOGO'S BUDGET AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS FOR 1980.

7. TOGO'S HOTEL SITUATION, FROM THE FINANCIAL POINT OF VIEW, IS ABYSMAL, WITH UNDER A 5Ø PERCENT PER NIGHT AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE (ALTHOUGH DURING 1980 EASTER HOLIDAY ALL HOTEL SPACES IN LOME WERE FULLY BOOKED). ALMOST EVERY HOTEL IN TOGO LOST MONEY IN 1979. THE 29 TO 32 (IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU COUNT, BUT NEVER REACHES 44) STORY FEBRUARY 2 HOTEL ADDS TO AN ALREADY CRUSHING BURDEN ON THE BUDGET. THE RECENTLY-OPENED SARAKAWA HOTEL EVIDENTLY HAS ATTRACTED MORE VISITORS THAN ANTICIPATED WITHOUT HARMING THE OTHER HOTELS. A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN LOME HAVE ALSO HELPED TO KEEP THE HOTEL SITUATION FROM BEING A TOTAL DISASTER. LASTLY, TOGO DID HAVE 76,ØØØ TOURISTS VISIT IN 1978 AND HOPES TO ATTRACT 1ØØ,ØØØ IN 1980. NONE OF THESE FACTORS JUSTIFIES THE GROSS EXPENDITURES BY TOGO ON TOURISM, BUT THEY DO HELP TO MITIGATE A VERY BAD SITUATION.

8. THE AIRPORT NEAR PYA AT NIAMTOUGOU IS INDEED IN THE BUSH ALTHOUGH BESIDE THE MAIN HIGHWAY TO UPPER VOLTA. IT IS DESIGNED TO HANDLE MILITARY AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL CLASS AIRCRAFT SUCH AS THE BOEING 707 AND DC-1Ø AND MAKES LITTLE ECONOMIC SENSE TO EUROPEANS. HOWEVER, THE AIRPORT MAY HELP OPEN UP THE DISADVANTAGED NORTH AND SHOULD BE THE CENTRAL STOPOVER POINT FOR FLIGHTS BY AIR TOGO TO THE INTERIOR AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO THE NORTH. IT COULD SERVICE TOURISTS WHO WANT TO VISIT THE NORTH BUT NOT TRAVEL BY ROAD BOTH WAYS.

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9. TOGO'S FOREIGN DEBT IS SOME ONE BILLION DOLLARS NOT 1.2 BILLION AND REPRESENTS 3.4 TIMES ESTIMATED EXPORT EARNINGS IN 1979. HOWEVER, REAL MEASURE OF DEBT LOAD INVOLVES DEBT SERVICING LEVEL FOR A GIVEN YEAR, ABILITY TO GENERATE FUTURE EXPORT EARNINGS TO SERVICE DEBT AND COMPOSITION OF FOREIGN DEBT, WHETHER PRIVATELY OR PUBICLY HELD. USING THESE MEASURES WITHOUT DEBT RESCHEDULING TOGO'S DEBT SERVICING BURDEN WOULD HAVE REACHED 30 PERCENT IN 1979 AND ARREARAGES ON DEBT PLUS DEBT SERVICING WOULD HAVE MADE DEBT PAYMENTS STAGGERING IN 1980. EXPORT EARNINGS WERE NOT INCREASING QUICKLY ENOUGH TO SERVICE THE DEBT, AND THE MAJORITY OF NEW FOREIGN DEBT IN THE 1975-77 PERIOD WAS PRIVATELY HELD AND EXTENDED ON COMMERCIAL TERMS. AS A RESULT, TOGO FACES A SEVERE ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND ITS HIGH LEVEL OF FOREIGN DEBT IS THE MAJOR IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM.

10. THUS, MR. OLYMPIO'S ECONOMIC CHARGES ARE NOT WITHOUT FOUNDATION, THOUGH THEY ARE RIDDLED WITH ERROR AS WELL AS GROSS SIMPLFICATION AND EXAGGERATION. WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO OUTSIDE OBSERVERS AND THE TOGOLESE IS THAT, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, THE PRESIDENT AND TOGOLESE OFFICIALS SEEM TO HAVE LEARNED MAJOR LESSONS FROM THE FREE SPENDING DAYS OF 1974-78 AND APPEAR LESS APT TO REPEAT THEIR EARLIER MISTAKES.

11. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE CHARGES THAT FEES OF 10 TO 15 PERCENT HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOR ECONOMIC PROJECTS, THOUGH THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS MAY HAVE BENEFITTED FINANCIALLY FROM SOME OF THE BUSINESS DEALINGS. THE WEALTHY GILCHRIST OLYMPIO IS IN NO POSITION TO THROW STONES. U.S. SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION CIVIL ACTION NUMBER 79-1760 DISCUSSES PAYMENTS MADE BY AN AMERICAN FIRM TO GILCHRIST OLYMPIO. WHILE EYADEMA HAS BUILT A LARGE RESIDENCE IN LOME AND IS SAID TO HAVE RESIDENCES IN FRANCE, THE COST AND MEANS OF FINANCING SUCH PROJECTS ARE NOT CLEAR. THE TWO VILLAS IN PARIS ARE MAINTAINED BY THE GOVERNMENT AT A PUBLISHED COST OF 17,050,000 CFA.

12. TOGOLESE AIR FORCE DOES HAVE APPROXIMATELY ONE DOZEN JET FIGHTERS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THIS EQUIPMENT IS USED TO FRIGHTEN VILLAGERS. THERE IS NO ACTIVE INSURGENCY IN TOGO. IN VIEW OF TOGO'S SMALL SIZE, SMALL POPULATION, AND LONG BORDERS, AND THE 1978 MERCENARY SUPPORTED ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW EYADEMA, THE AIR-CRAFT COULD BE JUDGED TO BE A FLEXIBLE MINIMUM DETERRENT FORCE. THE TWO PATROL BOATS WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE MINIMUM ADEQUATE TO ASSURE TOGO ANY CONTROL OVER ITS COASTLINE, HOWEVER SHORT. THEY PERFORM COAST GUARD SERVICES.

13. WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES, MOST OF THESE ARE ADDRESSED IN THE ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. IT IS

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GENERALLY AGREED THAT EYADEMA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF FORMER PRESIDENT OLYMPIO. THERE IS NO CONFIRMING EVIDENCE OF MORE RECENT CHARGES OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATION. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF CERTAIN EXTENDED FAMILIES WHOSE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PLOT TO ASSASSINATE THE PRESIDENT BY EMPLOYING FOREIGN MERCENARIES, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OR RUMOR IN TOGO THAT WHOLE VILLAGES HAVE BEEN PUT INTO CONCENTRATION CAMPS. DEFINITELY THERE IS ARBITRARY DETENTION IN TOGO BUT THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED AND PERIODS AND CONDITIONS OF DETENTION ARE UNCLEAR. THE REGIME DOES NOT PERMIT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. WHILE SOME EDUCATED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION ARE DISCOURAGED BY THE LACK OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY SUPPORT OLYMPIO. FROM THE EYADEMA PERSPECTIVE, THE OLYMPIO FAMILY STOOD FOR THE COASTAL ELITE THAT HE SUPPLANTED IN FAVOR OF MORE REPRESENTATIVE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INCLUDING ALL REGIONS, ESPECIALLY THE UNDERPRIVILEGED NORTH. EYADEMA CLAIMS, WITH SOME EVIDENCE, THAT OLYMPIO TREATED HIS OPPONENTS HARSHLY, MAINLY THROUGH YOUTH GANGS. ALLEGATIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS USED NORTH KOREAN ADVISORS TO REFINE TORTURE IN HIS JAILS HAVE BEEN HEARD HERE, BUT CANNOT BE CONFIRMED.

14. THE CULT OF THE PERSONALITY IS RAMPANT ON THE ORDERS OF PARTY LEADERS OTHER THAN THE PRESIDENT, AND HIS IMAGE IS UBIQUITOUS. SELECTED STUDENTS AND PARTY GROUPS REGULARLY REHEARSE ANIMATION SONGS AND DANCES, BUT MORE LIKELY TWICE A WEEK THAN TWO HOURS A DAY. PROFESSIONALS READ THE NEWS AND SPEECHES ON TELEVISION. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PRESIDENT MAY SHOW HIM IN MILITARY UNIFORM WITH SHOULDER BOARDS, BUT THEY ARE CLEARLY UNADORNED WITH

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15. ALL STATISTICAL DATA CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPHS 2-14 CAN BE CONSIDERED UNCLASSIFIED. DEPARTMENT MAY USE COMMENTARY AT ITS DISCRETION. JOHNSON

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